

CELIAC DISEASE

Important information regarding your health

Celiac disease is a digestive disease that damages the small intestine and interferes with absorption of food nutrients. The cause of celiac disease is from the body's immune system damaging the lining of the small intestine as a response to gluten. This lining has small, finger-like growths called villi that normally absorb nutrients from the foods we eat. When the villi are damaged, the body cannot absorb the nutrients it needs. This means a person with celiac disease can't eat gluten, a protein found in wheat, rye, or barley.

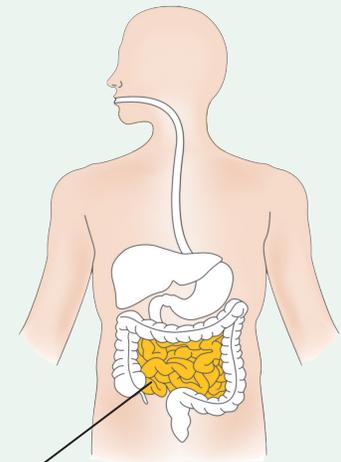
Originally thought to be a rare childhood syndrome, celiac disease is now known to be a common genetic disorder. More than 2 million people in the United States have the disease, or about 1 in 133 people. Among people who have a first-degree relative - a parent, sibling, or child - diagnosed with celiac disease, as many as 1 in 22 people may have the disease.

Common Symptoms:

Celiac disease can be very serious. Besides stomach pains, it can cause anemia, malnutrition, infertility, a certain skin rash, and other health problems. Most people with celiac disease have one or more symptoms, but not all have digestive problems. In some cases, people with the disease may not have any symptoms.

Symptoms of celiac disease include the following:

- Gas
- Diarrhea
- Stomach pain
- Feeling very tired
- Change in mood
- Weight loss
- A very itchy skin rash, with blisters
- Slowed growth in children



Small Intestines

Diagnosis:

Celiac disease can be hard to diagnose because its symptoms are like many other digestive diseases. It is often mistaken for another problem, such as food intolerance or irritable bowel syndrome, and you may be treated for one of these problems first.

During your examination your physician will ask questions about your symptoms and eating habits. Typically, a blood test will be ordered to see if you have certain antibodies that could mean you have the disease. To confirm you have the disease, an endoscopy procedure will be performed. In this test, a doctor uses an endoscope - a thin, lighted flexible tube - to look at the inside of your small intestine. During the endoscopy, the doctor may take a small sample of tissue to be sent to a pathologist - a physician who specializes in the diagnosis of disease via microscopic examination of a tissue sample - to determine what disease or condition you have. The pathologist's diagnosis is key to determining the need for further treatment.



Physician Notes:



For more information:

American Celiac Society

P. O. Box 23455

New Orleans, LA 70183-0455

Phone: 504.305.2968

Internet: www.americanceeliacociety.org

Celiac Disease Foundation

13251 Ventura Boulevard, Suite 240

Woodlands Hills, CA 91364

Phone: 818.716.1513

Internet: www.celiac.org

Treatment Option:

The only treatment for celiac disease is a gluten-free diet. A dietitian, an expert in food and healthy eating, can work with you to help you learn how to select gluten-free foods. If you eliminate gluten from your diet, your small intestine will heal. If you eat gluten or consume foods that contain gluten, you will harm your small intestine. The following list provides examples of foods you should avoid if you have celiac disease. The list is not complete: dietary needs differ from person to person. A dietitian can help you learn what other foods you can/cannot eat when following a gluten-free diet.

Foods to avoid:

The doctor may first treat your Celiac disease with antiinflammatory drugs. These drugs help to stop inflammation and help to relieve pain and diarrhea. Based on your initial response your doctor may then alter the drugs and medications to include items such as steroids or immune system suppressors.

- Wheat (Wheat starch, wheat bran, wheat germ, cracked wheat, hydrolyzed wheat protein)
- Barley
- Rye
- Triticale (a cross between wheat and rye)
- Processed foods that may contain wheat, barley, or rye, including (but not limited to) bouillon cubes, chips/ potato chips, candy, cold cuts, hot dogs, salami, sausage, french fries, gravy, rice mixes, soy sauce, and some soups.

Questions to Ask Your Healthcare Provider:

- What dietary changes are recommended?
- Are there lifestyle changes I need to make?



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